

# When Children and their Families Need Help

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Ministry of Community and Social  
Services

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## Introduction

Families are very special people. Whether they are headed by natural parents, adoptive parents, guardians, a single parent or a foster parent, families are the foundation of our society and the next generation. Nothing can ever replace the loving care and attention that parents are capable of giving to their children.

That's why, when things go wrong, it's important that families receive help. A family can look to their local children's aid society or family and children's services for help and understanding. The local CAS provides services to assist families in working out their problems.

Many families apply to the children's aid society for these services. Through guidance and education parents and their children come to understand some of the problems that can arise in family living. A minor crisis can be dealt with before it becomes a major problem.

A children's aid society, created under the authority of *The Child Welfare Act*, is a non-profit corporation formed by concerned people in the community to help children suffering from neglect or abuse and to support families in their child caring responsibilities.

Each year the children's aid societies in Ontario serve about 37,000 families, involving more than 88,000 children. Some children's aid societies are called family and children's services, but the nature of their services remains the same.

## Who Does the Children's Aid Help?

The CAS in your community helps many different people—a single parent needing emotional support, a couple wanting to adopt or a teen who can't get along at home. The services of the children's aid society are available to any family in any community throughout Ontario. The society can provide a team of experts and trained volunteers who are skilled in solving family problems. The CAS provides counselling and community programs to families who need help with their child. Through *The Child Welfare Act*, the children's aid society is responsible to the Ministry of Community and Social Services and has a legal mandate to protect children. Its funding comes from all three levels of government.

## When Should You Phone the CAS?

When you as a parent find you need help in coping with your children, do not hesitate to call. The CAS is there to help you and your family live in harmony with each other.

When you as a teacher, a neighbor or a relative, become aware of family conditions where a child needs protection, by law you must report this information to a society. When public officials, such as doctors, lawyers and policemen have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse, they must also report their findings to a CAS or be subject to a fine under recent amendments to *The Child Welfare Act*. All information is treated in a confidential manner by the CAS worker. Children may also get in touch with the CAS when they need help or are seeking help for a friend.

Because of their legal mandate to protect children, a society must investigate all complaints about a child being in danger and take the appropriate action to protect children.

## What Happens When You Phone the CAS?

By law, under *The Child Welfare Act*, a CAS must follow up any report concerning the neglect, desertion, or abuse of a child. The worker goes to the child's home in order to find out if the complaint is justified. Is the situation temporary or is it persistent and damaging to the child? Working with the family, the CAS attempts to determine the cause of the situation. If a child is in danger, the child is immediately removed to a receiving home or other place of safety until plans can be made for him. When a child is removed from the home by the CAS, the CAS must take the matter before a family court judge within five days.

Other types of calls to the CAS also receive prompt attention. Many people phone about problems arising out of family living. A teenage mother may need someone to help her care for her new baby, parents may need marriage counselling, or a difficult-to-manage child may require a worker to make frequent visits to the home. The professional staff also help families locate other community resources such as housing, treatment for alcoholism or job retraining. When children and their families need help, you can count on the CAS.

## Keeping Families Together at Home

One of the main goals of the CAS is to help families provide adequate care for their children in their own home. If a child is not in danger, but there are indications of neglect or abuse, the worker in cooperation with the family will find ways to correct the situation. Many children's aid societies offer a variety of services ranging from parent effectiveness training groups to the provision of visiting homemaker services. Frequent visits by a CAS worker help parents manage difficult situations in constructive ways.



## When the Home Situation Doesn't Work Out

Although the children's aid society makes every effort to keep children and their parents together, there are times when this may not be feasible. For example, when a teenager can't get along at home or when parents and the CAS worker agree that the child can no longer be adequately cared for at home, parents can enter into a voluntary agreement with the CAS to have their children looked after temporarily.

On the other hand, if the CAS worker finds a child in danger in the home, the CAS can legally remove the child to a place of safety. The worker must appear before a judge within five days to ask for a legal ruling. The child and the parents may be represented by their own lawyers if they wish.

## What Happens if the Case is Brought to Court?

Despite the best efforts put forth to prevent family breakdown or to give supportive service to families with problems, some parents do not provide adequate care for their children. In these cases, the child must be taken into the care of the CAS.

When a court finds that a child is in need of protection, the judge may rule in one of three ways. The judge may decide the child can be returned to his parents subject to CAS supervision in the home or elsewhere for a period not less than six months and not more than 12 months. The other alternatives, "society wardship" and "crown wardship", whereby the judge having decided it is not in the best interests of the child to be returned to the home, result in the child being made a ward of the society or the crown and placed in a foster home or group home. At the time of ruling, the judge determines appropriate access arrangements for wards and parents during the wardship period. Six months after a child has been declared a ward, the parents may apply to the court for a review of the child's status. If the court feels the child may be safely returned to the home, the wardship is terminated.



## What is a Foster Home?

“Society Wardship” can last up to 12 months with a possible extension to 24 months.

All crown wards are reviewed annually by the ministry to ensure that appropriate plans are made for each child. Where possible, crown wards are placed in permanent adoption homes.

Children who must be taken “into care” by the CAS are usually placed in a foster home. Foster parents, recruited from the community, are couples who like to have children around them and often have children of their own. Many foster parents take courses given by the CAS to develop their child caring skills. The society provides clothing and a spending allowance for the child as well as taking care of medical, dental and special education costs. It also pays the foster parents for the child’s board and makes frequent visits to the foster home to aid in the adjustment process.

Many people who enjoy children and either don’t wish to add to their family permanently or can’t have a family of their own, decide to become foster parents. The joys and satisfactions of parenting apply just as much to the foster child as to the natural child. It is highly rewarding to see an unhappy, troubled child begin to respond to a new and more positive environment, forgetting old fears and learning new skills. Some foster parents may experience problems of adjustment which can be shared with a social worker or other foster parents.

## How Does the CAS Help Troubled Teenagers?

When teenagers are in conflict with their parents or the law, the CAS often uses group homes as an alternative to institutional living. The group home is usually located in a residential area, with five or more adolescents and live-in house parents. For many young people this is a last chance for a normal life. The courts have given them a brief period of time to make changes in their lives and pursue meaningful goals, with the backup support of concerned adults. So, if you have a group home in your community, be a good neighbour.

Pregnant teenagers are also helped by the CAS. A worker will discuss their problems in confidence and help them find solutions. The CAS will provide information and counselling to help young people make a decision about whether to keep the baby or request adoption procedures. A single parent under the age of 16 can also be a child in need of protection. The parent or legal guardian of a girl under 16 must be involved in any decision to keep the baby or put it up for adoption. In cases where the pregnant teenager and her parents cannot agree on the future of the child, even with the aid of a social worker, the case must be brought to court.

## The CAS Needs Your Support

The children's aid society needs the support of the community if it is to carry out its duties as defined in *The Child Welfare Act*, of Ontario. It's up to everyone—police, doctors, teachers, relatives or neighbors on the same street—to see that children are not neglected or abused. People caring about others in their community is what it's all about. Don't be afraid to get involved. Children need our love and attention. Your involvement could be a phone call about a family in distress or you could become a volunteer or foster parent or a member of your society. If you would like to help, contact your local CAS or family and children's services for more information.

## Children's Aid Societies

### **Algoma**

65 Willow Avenue  
Sault Ste. Marie,  
Ont.  
P6B 5B1  
(705) 949-0162

### **Brant**

Box 774  
70 Chatham St.  
Brantford, Ont.  
N3T 5RY  
(519) 753-8681

### **Bruce**

Box 279  
208 Scott St.  
Walkerton, Ont.  
N0G 2V0  
(519) 881-1822

### **Dufferin**

Court House  
51 Zina St.  
Orangeville, Ont.  
L9W 1E5  
(519) 941-1530

### **\*Durham**

Box 321  
200 John St. W.  
Oshawa, Ont.  
L1H 7L3  
(416) 723-5211

### **Elgin**

27 Southwick St.  
St. Thomas, Ont.,  
N5R 3R7  
(519) 631-1492

### **Essex**

690 Cartaraqui St.  
Windsor, Ont.  
N9A 3P1  
(519) 252-1171

### **Essex R.C.**

Box 2306  
Walkerville Postal  
Station  
1700 Assumption  
Windsor, Ont.,  
N8Y 4S2  
(519) 256-3176

### **Frontenac**

329 Johnson St.  
Kingston, Ont.  
K7L 1Y6  
(613) 542-7351

### **Grey**

Box 129  
715-3rd Ave. E.  
Owen Sound, Ont.  
N4K 5P1  
(519) 376-7893

### **\*Haldimand**

Box 909  
653 Broad St. W.  
Dunnville, Ont.  
N1A 1T8  
(416) 774-7471

### **Halton**

467 Speers Rd.  
Oakville, Ont.  
L6K 3S4  
(416) 844-8211

### **Hamilton-Wentworth**

143 Wentworth St.  
S.  
Hamilton, Ont.  
L8N 2Z1  
(416) 522-1121

### **Hamilton-Wentworth R.C.**

627 Main St. E.  
Hamilton, Ont.  
L8M 1J5  
(416) 525-2012

### **\*Hastings**

Box 186  
311 Front St.  
Belleville, Ont.  
K8N 5A2  
(613) 962-9291



**Huron**

46 Gloucester  
Terrace  
Goderich, Ont.  
N7A 1W7  
(519) 524-7356

**\*Kapuskasing**

Box 188  
Model City Mall  
Kapuskasing, Ont.  
P5N 2Y3  
(705) 335-2301

**Kawartha-  
Haliburton**

570 Water St.  
Peterborough, Ont.  
K9H 3M8  
(705) 743-9751

**\*Kenora**

R.R. # 1,  
Ocean Ave.  
Kenora, Ont.  
P9N 3W7  
(807) 468-5508

**Kent**

Box 157  
435 Grand Ave. W.  
Chatham, Ont.  
N7M 5K3  
(519) 352-0440

**Lambton**

Box 41  
720 N. Christina St.  
Sarnia, Ont.  
N7T 7H8  
(519) 337-3231

**Lanark**

33 Craig St.  
Perth, Ont.  
K7H 1X8  
(613) 267-3140

**\*Leeds & Grenville**

Box 549, R.R. # 1  
Brockville, Ont.  
K6V 5V7  
(613) 342-0310

**Lennox & Addington**

41 Dundas St.W.  
Napanee, Ont.  
K7R 1Z5  
(613) 354-4724

**\*London &  
Middlesex**

Box 848,  
Station "B"  
164 Albert St.  
London, Ont.  
N6A 4Z5  
(519) 434-8461

**\*Muskoka**

Box 1107  
62 Kimberley  
Bracebridge, Ont.  
P0B 1C0  
(705) 645-4426

**\*Niagara Region**

Box 516  
311 Geneva St.  
St. Catharines, Ont.  
L2R 6W5  
(416) 937-7731

**\*Nipissing**

Box 1035  
240 Algonquin Ave.  
North Bay, Ont.  
P1B 8K3  
(705) 472-0910

**\*Norfolk**

Box 601,  
County Bldg.  
Simcoe, Ont.  
N3Y 4M1  
(519) 426-4290

**\*Northumberland**

230 Walton St.  
Port Hope, Ont.  
L1A 1P2  
(416) 885-8131

## **Ottawa**

1370 Bank St.  
Ottawa, Ont.  
K1H 7Y3  
(613) 733-0670

## **\*Oxford**

Box 312  
92 Light St.  
Woodstock, Ont.  
N4S 7X6  
(519) 539-6176

## **Parry Sound**

76 Church St.  
Parry Sound, Ont.  
P2A 1Z1  
(705) 743-5851

## **Peel**

49 Kennedy Rd. S.  
Brampton, Ont.  
L6W 3E4  
(416) 453-4200

## **Perth**

Box 278  
380 Hibernia St.  
Stratford, Ont.  
N5A 6T1  
(519) 271-5290

## **Porcupine**

54 Algonquin Blvd.E.  
Timmins, Ont.  
P4N 1A2  
(705) 264-4257

## **Prescott & Russell**

Box 248  
Main St.  
Plantagenet, Ont.  
K0B 1L0  
(613) 673-5148

## **Prince Edward**

Box 1510  
6 Ross St.  
Picton, Ont.  
K0K 2T0  
(613) 476-2765

## **Rainy River**

512 Central Ave.  
Fort Frances, Ont.  
P9A 1X9  
(807) 274-3281

## **\*Renfrew**

1219 Pembroke St. E.  
Pembroke, Ont.  
K8A 7R8  
(613) 735-6866

## **Simcoe**

County  
Administration  
Centre  
Midhurst, Ont.  
L0L 1X0  
(705) 726-6587

## **Stormont, Dundas & Glengary**

Box 994  
27 York St.  
Cornwall, Ont.  
K6H 5V1  
(613) 933-2292

## **Sudbury-Manitoulin**

1492 Paris St.  
Sudbury, Ont.,  
P3E 3B8  
(705) 522-8600

## **\*Temiskaming**

Box 1084  
64 Government  
Rd.W.  
Kirkland Lake, Ont.  
P2N 3L1  
(705) 567-9201

## **Thunder Bay**

Box 2027, Station P  
309 South Court  
Thunder Bay, Ont.  
P7B 5E7  
(807) 344-9124

**Toronto**

33 Charles St. E.  
Toronto, Ont.  
M4Y 1R9  
(416) 924-4646

**Toronto R.C.**

26 Maitland St.  
Toronto, Ont.  
M4Y 1C6  
(416) 925-6641

**Waterloo**

355 Charles St.E.  
Kitchener, Ont.  
N2G 2P8  
(519) 576-0540

**\*\*Wellington**

Box 1088  
55 Delhi St.  
Guelph, Ont.  
N1H 6N3  
(519) 824-2410

**York**

Box 358  
85 Eagle St.  
Newmarket, Ont.  
L3Y 4X1  
(416) 895-2318

**Jewish Family and  
Child Service of  
Metropolitan Toronto**  
3101 Bathurst St.  
6th floor,  
Toronto, Ont.  
M6A 2A6  
(416) 781-1592

**Ontario Association  
of Children's Aid  
Societies**  
663 Yonge St. Suite  
502  
Toronto, Ont.  
M4Y 2A4  
(416) 924-2094

**Northern Region**

*Sudbury*

111 Larch St.  
8th Floor  
Sudbury, Ont. P3E 4T5  
(705) 674-7543

*Thunder Bay*

710 Victoria Ave.  
Suite 301  
Thunder Bay, Ont.  
P7C 5P7  
(807) 475-1345

*Timmins*

P.O. Box 1720  
South Porcupine, Ont.  
P0H 1H0  
(705) 264-9407

\*Name is "Family and Children's Services"

\*\*Name is Children's Aid Society and Family  
Counselling Service



### **Southeastern Region**

#### *Kingston*

1055 Princess St.  
Kingston, Ont. K7L 5T3  
(613) 549-6461

#### *Ottawa*

90 Lady Ellen Place,  
Suite 11  
Ottawa, Ont. K1Z 5L5  
(613) 722-3494

#### *Peterborough*

263 1/2 George St.  
Peterborough, Ont.  
K9J 3G6  
(705) 743-1624

### **Central Region**

#### *Barrie*

70 Collier St.  
5th Floor  
Barrie, Ont. L4M 4Z2  
(705) 737-1311

#### *Toronto*

110 Eglinton Ave. W.  
5th Floor  
Toronto, Ont. M4R 2C9  
(416) 965-5340

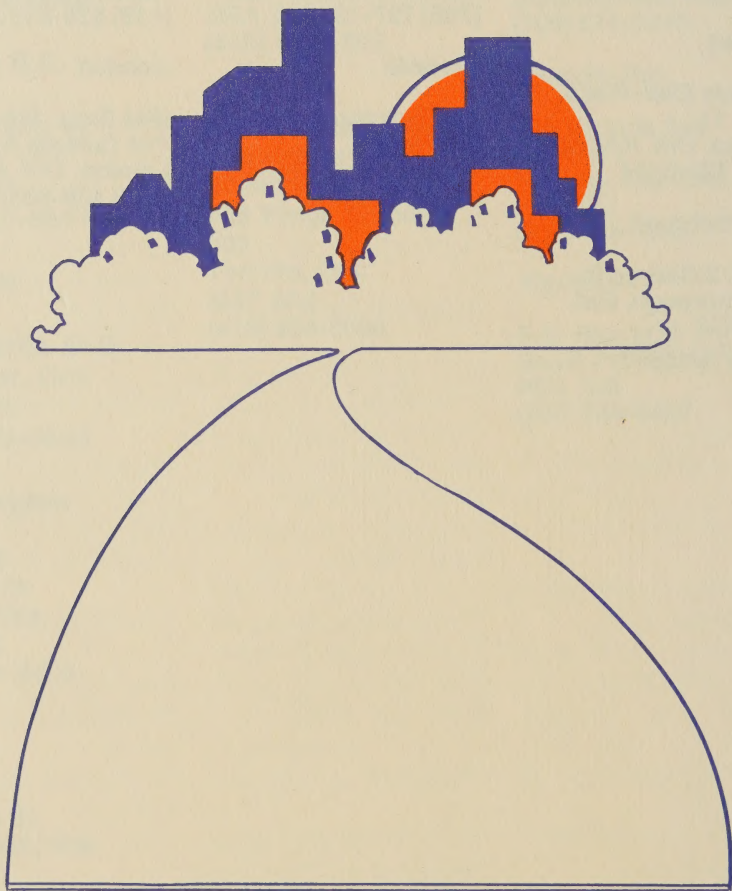
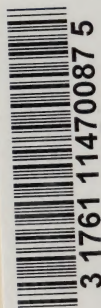
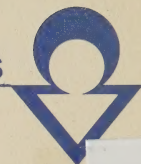
### **Southwestern Region**

#### *Hamilton*

499 King St. East  
St. John's Place, 2nd Fl.  
Hamilton, Ont. L8N 1E1  
(416) 525-6431

#### *London*

IBM Bldg., 5th Fl.  
195 Dufferin Ave.  
London, Ont. N6A 1K7  
(519) 438-8387



Ontario

Ministry of  
Community and  
Social Services



1979 International  
Year of the Child